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“THAT’S THE METAPHOR YOU’RE GOING FOR?” DELIBERATE METAPHOR AND HUMOR

Abstract. This paper aims at discussing the function of deliberate metaphors in humorous narratives due to the similarities in mechanisms underlying both elements of language. This corpus-based analysis has shown the relation between deliberate metaphors and elements of the knowledge resources of the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH). The study has revealed that if deliberate metaphors are part of humorous narratives, they are more likely to be the source of the funniness rather than the transit system which conveys the metaphors themselves. With this in mind, it is possible to assess the extent to which deliberate metaphors contribute to humor.

Keywords: deliberate metaphor, humor, GTVH, metaphor identification, corpus study.

1. Introduction

For cognitivists, metaphor is much more than just a literary device used by writers. Metaphoricity occurs when the target domain, usually abstract, is described in terms of the source domain, which is usually concrete. Therefore, we understand love as a journey or war, the brain as a computer, or anger as heat. Such conceptualization allows for a better understanding of complex abstract notions. Metaphors are a huge part of our cognition, which proves that we not only find metaphors in books and poems, we *live by them* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

A recent shift from the two-dimensional aspect of metaphor to the three-dimensional one has fueled discussion on the intentional character of metaphors (Gibbs, 2015; Steen, 2015). According to the Deliberate Metaphor Theory (DMT), metaphor used *as* metaphor occurs when the source domain is evoked in the interpretation process (although the hearer does not need to be aware of the metaphorical character), and

such metaphor is realized in the third dimension, namely the communicative one (Steen, 2017). This aspect of metaphors is discussed from a rather rhetorical- and discourse-based perspective, arguing for the use of metaphors *as* metaphors to achieve certain communicative goals (Reijnierse et al., 2018).

So far, much has been said about deliberateness in terms of politics, newspaper articles, fiction, and academic language (Reijnierse et al., 2018), thus posing a question about other types of written and spoken texts, as humorous narrative is yet another kind of discourse that may use deliberate metaphors.

The delivery of jokes, although an art in itself, is dictated by several factors, and the choice of words is one of them. Wrongly used terms and misplaced punchlines can create more confusion than laughter, something which they are not intended to do. In turn, deliberate metaphors make use of the choice of words as well: the more incongruity between the domains, the more prominent the referential of the source domain. The mismatch, be it of the frames of metaphors or scripts of the jokes, is the common point of these seemingly different elements, making the deliberate metaphors a potentially handy source of funniness.

This paper aims at discussing the function deliberate metaphors have in humorous contexts. While creating a theory unifying humor and metaphors seems to be impossible (Attardo, 2015), there is a noticeable similarity between the mechanisms underlying them; the source and target domains seem to correspond to the incongruity, and the explanation behind the deliberateness resembles the mechanism behind a joke. The verbal and text-based character of the metaphors makes it possible to analyze them in terms of the humor theory (Attardo, 2015), but is it possible to use this framework to assess the functionality of deliberate metaphors within the jokes? Intentionality and choice of words in humorous narratives are, in most cases, far from accidental, similarly to deliberate metaphors.

Based on the two theories, I hypothesize that intentionally created conscious metaphors contribute to humor due to their referential and attention-requiring nature. Thus, the function of deliberate metaphors can be categorized in two ways: both as a source of and as a way to express funniness. First, if the source and target domains are similar to at least one of the incongruous elements and the logical mechanism possibly matches the explanation of deliberateness, then the deliberate metaphor is the source of humor in a particular narrative. The idea is that if the scripts match the domains, the mechanism behind the opposition will be similar to the deliberateness of the metaphor. Conversely, if the meanings of a given metaphor and scripts

are dissimilar, that would indicate that while the analyzed metaphor is not the source of humor, it could still contribute to the funniness of the joke; the metaphor could possibly be an introduction to humor or serve as a base for other knowledge resources. In order to confirm or deny the hypothesis, it was necessary to form a couple-step method combining (but not unifying) both theories.

This paper consists of two parts. The first part is devoted to the theoretical aspects of the study, namely the Deliberate Metaphor Theory (Steen, 2011) Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure (Reinijer et al., 2018) and the General Theory of Verbal Humor (Attardo & Raskin, 1991; Attardo, 2001). The second part is devoted to the corpus-driven categorization of deliberate metaphors according to the function they can serve in a humorous narrative: to be either a source or a means to convey the funniness.

2. Deliberate Metaphor Theory

The traditional cognitive approach to metaphor; that is, making use of something concrete to talk about something abstract, claims that metaphor is two-dimensional: it occurs in both language and thought. With Steen’s (2017) development of the Deliberate Metaphor Theory (DMT), one more dimension should be taken into account: communication. DMT states that there are metaphors that are used *as* metaphors, meaning speakers are aware of the metaphorical character of the utterance, and that their source domain is part of the referential meaning. The theory itself has been a subject of discussion in recent years, most notably between Steen and Gibbs (Steen, 2015, 2017; Gibbs 2015, 2017). Steen argued for the existence of deliberate metaphors, and while Gibbs insisted that they are not different from consciously used novel metaphors, he acknowledged the communicative dimension. Steen, in turn, has agreed that deliberate metaphors are novel, but refuted Gibbs’s argument about consciousness. According to Steen (2017), being aware and *knowing* that you are aware of the metaphor are what distinguishes deliberate metaphors from the non-deliberate ones. Intentional metaphors draw temporary attention to the source domain and require conscious interpretation (also called referential process) of the domains. Deliberate metaphors allow for creative applications, and humorous discourse is one of many that benefit from it.

Let us take a look at a non-deliberate metaphor first. In one of the political satire shows *Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj* (Minhaj, 2019), the

host discusses illegal immigration and the perception of Muslim migrants entering the US:

- (1) They're going to tell you: *melanin monsters* are going to come here and eat your children, *Game of Thrones*-style.

This example is based on the racist implication that Muslims are bad people, and bad people are often described as monsters. Due to the conventionality of the BAD PERSON IS A MONSTER metaphor, the source domain is not part of the interpretation process. Even though the metaphor was used intentionally (to create a humorous effect, hence the metonymically used *melanin*), it did not require focusing on the monsters instead of people to understand the comparison.

Now let us discuss an example of a deliberate metaphor. In the episode on Affirmative Action, Minhaj shows an old video of a lawyer-activist who sued Harvard University. After showing the clip, Minhaj starts his bit with:

- (2) Okay, so what he's saying in this ISIS recruitment video, is...

By comparing the old TV material to the terrorist group's videos, he draws attention to the likeness of both media in image quality and message. Due to the unconventionality of this comparison, the source domain (ISIS recruitment video) is put into temporary focus, causing a conscious interpretation of the metaphor.

In order to further develop the theory, Steen and others have created a procedure to identify deliberate metaphors in discourse. The procedure itself relies heavily on the previously developed Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU), which was also created by, among others, Steen), but adds additional steps to account for the deliberateness of metaphors. Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure (DMIP, Reijnierse et al., 2018) is discussed below.

3. Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure

One of the claims against the early writings on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) was the issue of metaphor identification. Scholars who argued against the CMT claimed that the examples given by Lakoff and Johnson were artificial and tailor-made to suit the theory they were creating (Gibbs, 2011; Kövecses, 2008). There was no unified,

or at least widely used metaphor identification that would allow for reproducibility and repeatability. This changed in 2007 with the Pragglejaz Group and their Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), which has served as a foundation for numerous other procedures, not necessarily metaphor-related (Burgers et al., 2016; Šorm & Steen, 2018).

MIP as a corpus- and dictionary-based method aims at being more objective and less intuitive, but at the same time, its manual-like character can be strenuous and time-consuming in the case of longer texts. The central premise of this method is to compare and contrast contextual and underlying meanings of the analyzed words; after dividing an utterance word-by-word, each lexical unit is checked for the most basic (referring to the senses) dictionary meaning with reference to how it was used in a given context. If the contextual meaning is different from the basic one, but they can be connected, the word is deemed potentially metaphorical (Pragglejaz Group, 2007).

Yet another version of the MIP was developed by the scholars from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit, MIPVU; Steen et al., 2010b¹). It is based on the original MIP but allows for minimizing the unclear cases with several additional procedures.

MIPVU, contrary to MIP, distinguishes between direct, indirect, and implicit metaphor-related words (MRWs). When there is a difference between the basic and contextual meaning of the word or phrase, then it is an indirect metaphor:

- (3) “Complaining is honestly just part of the social fabric^{MRW} of our lives, it’s part of how we communicate,” Dr. Kowalski said (Higgs, 2020).

In the example above, the word *fabric* is being used metaphorically. Its basic sense indicates material used to produce clothes, and the contextual meaning refers to the basic structure which makes up one’s life.

On the other hand, when there is no difference, then a metaphor is direct; its metaphorical character is usually signaled with a metaphor flag such as *like*. Consequently, this kind of marking counts similes as direct metaphors. In the example below, environmental issues are likened to a war because of the high mortality rate of bees:

- (4) It’s like^{MFLAG} sending^{MRW-DIRECT} the bees to war^{MRW-DIRECT}. Many don’t come back. (McGivney, 2020)

Lastly, implicit metaphors are usually of a grammatical nature, such as pronouns used to refer to already mentioned metaphors. For example, *it* in

the sentence below is metaphorical as it refers to the already metaphorical word *step*:

- (5) Naturally, to embark on such as a step^{MRW} is not necessarily to succeed in realizing it^{MRW-IMPLICIT}. (Steen et al., 2010b: 39)

For more information about the procedure, see Steen et al., 2010b.

This paper discusses deliberate metaphors in humor; therefore, the distinction proposed by Steen et al. (2010b) is essential; deliberate metaphors are mostly direct (Steen et al., 2010), making them a key focus in this study. An extension of MIPVU, called Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure (DMIP), has been proposed and successfully applied to identify potentially deliberate metaphors (Reijnierse, 2017). The additional steps involve assessing whether the source domain of a metaphor-related word (MRW) is part of the referential meaning of the statement containing said MRW; in other words, whether the contextual meaning of an MRW is part of any of the dictionary meanings provided for this word. If it is not, then the MRW in question is potentially deliberate, as it may require a conscious interpretation. If the contextual meaning is provided, then the MRW is deemed not deliberate (Reijnierse et al., 2018).

Additionally, both MIPVU and DMIP treat ambiguous cases as potentially metaphorical or deliberate. Such instances are then marked with a WIDLII (When In Doubt, Leave It In) abbreviation. For a detailed description of the procedure, see Reijnierse et al., 2018.

Let us consider an example analysis. Barney, a womanizing character from the sitcom *How I Met Your Mother* (Carter and Craig, 2005), talks about his best friend's then-ex-fiancée Lily. Lily and Marshall had ended their long-term relationship, and Marshall was taking a long time to recover from the breakup. Barney says:

- (6) He got^{MRW} that redhead tumor^{MRW} removed^{MRW}
(Season 2, Episode 1)

After applying MIPVU, we are given three MRWs: *got*, *tumor*, and *removed*, and these three words we will analyze in terms of deliberateness.

The main premise of the DMIP is to assess whether the source domain is part of the referential or contextual meaning of the utterance in (6). With this in mind, *got* is not a deliberate metaphor, as both the contextual meaning ('have something done') and the basic meaning ('to obtain something') of *get* are defined in the dictionary. Therefore, the next step is to analyze

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tumor. Macmillan Dictionary (MMD) defines it as ‘as a mass of cells in your body that grow in a way that is not normal’. Barney compares Lily to a malignant tumor. He describes her as harmful, something that should be treated. The target domain (a person, an ex-girlfriend) is not listed as any of the MMD meanings. Therefore, it indicates a novel use of the tumor MRW and this MRW is potentially deliberate.

Removed refers to ending a relationship, but the basic meaning of *remove* is ‘to take something or someone away from a place’. The contextual meaning is not part of any of the given meanings, that is why it is a novel use, and this MRW is also potentially deliberate. The explanation of the referential meaning in this example can be: ‘Him breaking up with his girlfriend was like having a tumor removed’. The word-by-word DMIP analysis would be as follows:

(6) He got^{MRW} that redhead tumor^{MRW-DELIB} removed^{MRW-DELIB}

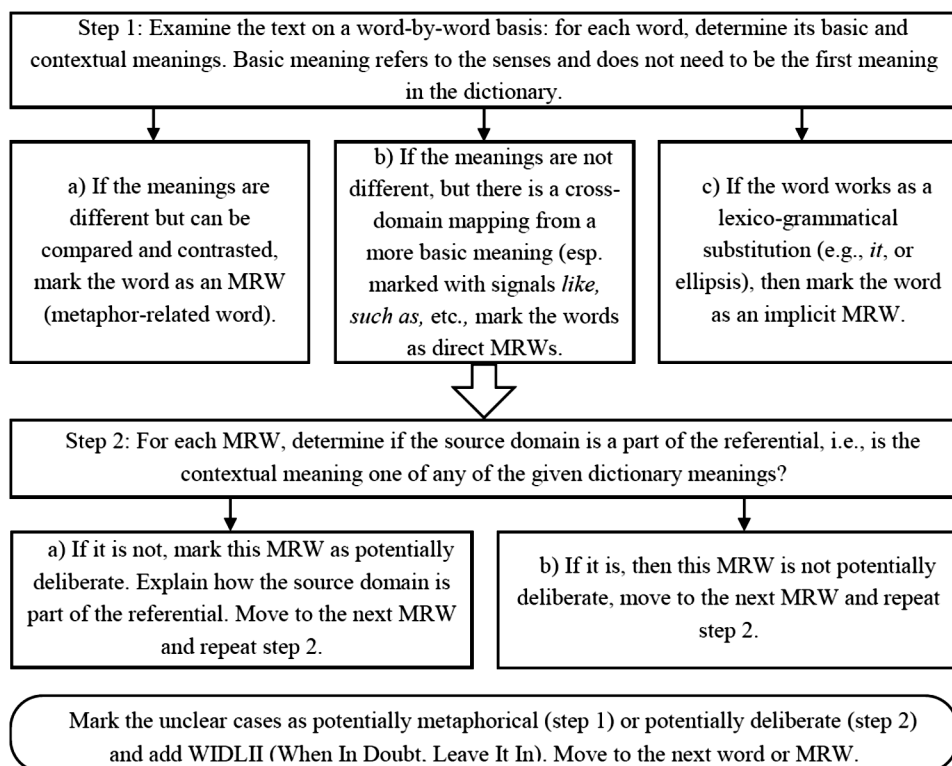


Figure 1. MIPVU and DMIP together (based on Pragglejaz Group, 2007; Steen et al., 2010b; Reijnierse et al., 2018)

4. General Theory of Verbal Humor

While explaining jokes is the opposite of being funny, humor has been a research subject since Aristotelian times (Larkin-Galiñanes, 2017). The most common theories of humor involve the notion of incongruity-resolution; that is to say, a discrepancy occurring within the joke and its at least partial explanation (Larkin-Galiñanes, 2017). One of the approaches which are, to a certain degree, based on this concept is the General Theory of Verbal Humor (later the GTVH) formed by Attardo and Raskin (1991). Its foundation, the Semantic-Script Theory of Humor (SSTH; Raskin, 1985), was the first theory truly rooted in linguistics, as opposed to the psychological and philosophical nature of other propositions. The SSTH claims that a script opposition is needed for a joke to take place. Scripts, as defined on the basis of semantics, are organized pieces of information about a given entity (Attardo, 2001, p. 2); a person, an object, or an event. Thus, if we take the following bar joke:

- (7) A perfectionist walked into a bar...apparently, it wasn't set high enough.

The activated script BAR entails everything that we know about bars; evoking the familiarity of walking in, placing an order, talking to the bartender, drinking alcohol, and many more associated notions.

However, in the second part of the joke another script is revealed, namely another dictionary meaning of the word *bar*: a long rod or piece of metal. Therefore, the script opposition occurs in the difference between patronizing a bar vs. bumping into a piece of metal.

The SSTH evolved into the General Theory of Verbal Humor. The GTVH claims that while script opposition is crucial, it is not the sole element of a humorous narrative. The other components of the joke, called knowledge resources (Attardo and Raskin, 1991; Attardo, 2001), are as crucial as Script Opposition, and they need to be “accessed” by the speakers and the audience to produce and interpret the narrative as it was intended. The knowledge resources include Script Opposition (SO), Logical Mechanism, Situation, Target, Narrative Strategy, and Language. While the list is not exhaustive, these six knowledge resources serve as a well-established framework for humor analysis. Other humor researchers stress the need for including additional possible resources such as context, or cultural aspect (Tsakona, 2013). Apart from the already discussed SO, the remaining five knowledge resources are reviewed in the following part of this section (based on Attardo, 2001; 2017).

Logical Mechanism

As the incongruity-resolution theories note, the discrepancy between the elements of the joke needs to be at least partially resolved, otherwise the humor may be missed and the narrative would be merely strange. In GTVH, the Logical Mechanism takes over, and “logically” explains the incongruity. It does not mean, however, that the resolutions need to be reasonable; otherwise, absurdity would not be a common part of numerous narratives. The logical element here refers to a link between the scripts. Therefore, in (7) the ambiguity of the word *bar* is the Logical Mechanism behind the joke. In brief, the way the scripts are opposed is as important as the scripts themselves.

Situation

In the case of the bar joke mentioned above, the situation is an introduction to the punchline. *A perfectionist walks into a bar* is the Situation resource. Situation comprises everything that surrounds the joke; that is, information about events happening in the background. Regardless of its connection to the joke, it is always present in the narrative. In other words, Situation consists of information about what, where, who, and when, if applicable.

Target

This knowledge resource can be linked to the superiority theory which claims that jokes are produced to ridicule something or someone, and that the joker feels superior to the target of the narrative. Targets are especially visible in the instances of stereotypical jokes, for instance, about a given nationality. However, not every humorous narrative has a target. One can argue that the bar joke in (7) targets an unspecified person, making it doubtful whether anyone in particular would be offended by it.

Narrative Strategy

The way a joke is organized in the text is also crucial. Narrative strategies can include one-liners, knock-knock jokes, riddles, conversations, monologues, and many more. Attardo (2001, 2017) categorizes humorous parts of a narrative into jab lines and punchlines and further differentiates them according to their placement within the joke. While both add to the humor and (partially) resolve the incongruity, punchlines occur in the final position, which is also regulated by the Language resource.

Language

Attardo (2001) defines this knowledge resource as the “verbalization of the joke,” in other words, the way it is being told, and it can refer to the linguistic aspect of the narrative. It can consist of information about morphological, syntactical, semantical, or phonological elements of the narrative (Attardo, 2017).

GTVH analysis

Understanding the differences among knowledge resources allows for narrative analysis. Let us consider the following dialog from the situation comedy *How I Met Your Mother* (Carter & Craig, 2005). Two main characters, Barney and Lily, talk about their common friend Robin, whom Barney wants to ask out on a date:

- (8) Lily: Robin needs to see this new part of you.
Barney: So, just call her up?
L: Just call her up.
B: (makes a high-pitched noise)
B: She wasn't there. I left a voicemail.
L: You left a voice, but it wasn't male. (season 4, episode 1)

The last exchange in the dialog is the punchline of the joke and the end of the narrative. If we were to analyze the joke according to the GTVH framework, it would be something along the lines of:

Script Opposition: leaving a voicemail vs. making a sound
Logical Mechanism: Barney became so stressed he made an incoherent noise and called it a voicemail
Situation: living room, a man trying to ask a woman on a date
Target: Barney (the caller)
Narrative Strategy: conversation
Language: a pun: *mail/male*

It is crucial to note that the GTVH does not explain the audience's reaction and is not concerned with the speakers' abilities to tell jokes. For a full explanation of this theory of humor, see Attardo (2001, 2015, 2017).

5. Methodology

As was stated in the introduction, the aim of this paper is to address the function of deliberate metaphors in humorous narratives: as a source, or as a way to convey funniness. The main objective was to assess the similarity between the scripts and the domains, and between the logical mechanism and the referential process of the metaphor.

An American sitcom *How I Met Your Mother* (Carter and Craig, 2005; *HIMYM*) served as the source of the corpus. Therefore, all subsequent quotes and examples have their source in this TV show (with the markings for the episode, e.g. 8x01, which would mean ‘Season 8, Episode 1’). It is worth noting that familiarizing oneself with the overall context of the series is essential to the analysis and was done prior to the study.

The first task was to prepare the corpus for the analysis. After acquiring the subtitles in the text format, the files were uploaded to the corpus management and analysis tool Sketch Engine (<http://sketchengine.eu>). The total word count reached about 600,000 words; the exact number was not determined due to the formatting elements and time stamps, which Sketch Engine also treats as words. The subtitles were not cleared of the additional information due to the importance of the tags for the subsequent steps in this study’s methodology.

Creating a corpus allowed for a concordance search. With the notion that the most deliberate metaphors are direct, meaning that they are marked with metaphor flags (such as the word *like*) and their primary and contextual meanings do not differ, I searched for concordances with the word *like*, finding a total of 2,910 instances. However, it should be noted that the results also included instances of *like* that were not the focus of the study. Therefore, to ensure consistency, a working definition based on Macmillan Dictionary (MMD) was created. For the purposes of this study, *like* was defined as follows:

1. similar or in a similar way
 - A. similar to someone or something else, or in a similar way to someone or something else
 - B. used for emphasizing a quality in the way that someone does something or in the way that something happens
 - C. in the same way as usual or as before
 - D. used when the same statement applies to each of two things (*Macmillan Dictionary online*, n.d.)

With this definition, I was able to determine the validity of the concordance search results. Examples below were categorized as in line with the definition:

- (9) It's like shopping in a marshmallow. (1x16)
- (10) It's like you're floating out in space. (1x22)
- (11) God, it's like Marshall's marrying the Taliban. (2x11)
- (12) Relationships are like a freeway. (2x12)
- (13) Your nose is bleeding like a faucet. (3x18)

And in turn, invalid examples included:

- (14) But you like olives. (1x01)
- (15) I haven't seen her in like, three years. (1x02)
- (16) I have to see some penguins, like, right now. (1x08)

Sketch Engine by default shows results in a chronological order (files are sorted alphabetically). Therefore, it was essential to randomize the draw of concordances, which is one of the features Sketch Engine has. Allowing for extracting examples spread across the corpus ensured diversity in the analysis.

The next step after drawing the concordances was to apply the Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure discussed in an earlier section. If the utterance was identified as a deliberate metaphor, I proceeded to distinguish humorous metaphors from the non-humorous ones based on the context. Additionally, the laugh track heard in the background served as supplemental proof of the humorous intent conveyed by the production crew. However, despite the creators' attempt to communicate funniness, the ultimate interpretation depends on the audience (Brock, 2016, p. 59). Nevertheless, the laugh track can provide an additional confirmation of possible humor in a given narrative (Moran et al., 2014). It is also the reason why in this study, the corpus was not cleared of the timestamps originating from the subtitles; markings quickened the checking process, as it was much easier to locate the line in question after the concordance search.

The last step of the analysis uses the knowledge resources from the GTVH. In order to check the relation between the deliberate metaphors

in question and humor, it was essential to see whether the metaphoricity matched any of the knowledge resources: with the difference that if it constituted either script opposition or logical mechanism, the metaphor was the source of humor. If the knowledge resources did not match the domains and the referential, the particular metaphor would only then be functioning as a conveyor of humor. Let us consider the following example:

- (17) God sent those lice to my head like he sent the locusts to Egypt, to liberate me from corporate bondage. (3x20)

From the DMIP, we can conclude that working a corporate job is the target domain, and the biblical slavery in Egypt is the source domain, with *like* being the MFlag (metaphor flag). In another perspective, the lice are likened to locusts, or rather the disease is compared to the plague. Finally, the last part of the DMIP is to explain how the source domain is part of the referential meaning. The discussed quote, therefore, would go along the lines of: ‘God sent those lice to my head to liberate me from corporate bondage like he sent locusts to Egypt to liberate the Israelites from slavery’.

After assessing the deliberateness of the metaphor, we can proceed with the knowledge resources analysis. The GTVH framework for this particular narrative goes as follows:

Script Opposition: a corporate job vs. slavery; quitting a job vs. liberation; a healthy condition vs. plague

Logical Mechanism: comparing slavery to the hardships of working a corporate job

Situation: Marshall was telling Robin how he stopped working a corporate job

Target: corporation

Narrative Strategy: conversation, simile

Language: register, intonation

The underlined part of the script opposition corresponds to the target and source domains from the DMIP. Therefore, it can be assumed that this potentially deliberate metaphor is the source of this particular humorous narrative.

For this study, a total of fifty instances of concordances with the MFlag *like* were assessed as potentially deliberate metaphors and subjected to further analysis, as discussed in the earlier part of this section. While the list is not finite, it gave the satisfying results that are reviewed below.

6. Results and discussion

Thirty-nine out of 50 deliberate metaphors were proved valid with respect to the knowledge resources analysis due to the contextual information and the occurrence of the laugh track. The remaining 11 belonged to the non-humorous parts of the episodes and they were not further examined in terms of the humor theory.

The main hypothesis was that the GTVH analysis could give an understanding of the deliberate metaphor's function in humor. Namely, if deliberate metaphors are the source of funniness, the source and target domains would at least partially correspond to the script opposition, and/or the comparison and contrast between them would be likened to the logical mechanism. If deliberate metaphors were to be only a means to express humor, they would possibly constitute other knowledge resources, but there would not be a direct link connecting them to either the script opposition or the logical mechanism.

The entire analysis has shown three types of deliberate metaphors in the context of TV sitcoms, results which provide considerable confirmation for the hypothesis I posed. Deliberate metaphors were either a source or a way to convey humor or were not humorous at all due to the context of the utterance. I would like to discuss the results, followed by examples from the corpus.

The first type, which occurred most widely in the analysis, was the deliberate metaphor as a source of funniness. All deliberate metaphors were deemed as the origin of the joke when at least one script from the script opposition corresponded to the source and target domains, and the description of the deliberateness was similar or identical to the logical mechanism.

Let us consider the following example: Ted and Barney are talking over the phone about one of their friend's upcoming wedding reception. Ted wants to invite their friend Robin as his date, to which Barney responds:

- (18) Bringing a date to a wedding is like bringing a deer carcass on a hunting trip. (1x12)

The first part of the simile is the target domain, while the second is the source. Neither a carcass nor a hunting trip is part of any of the meanings of a date or a wedding, which in turn indicate their novel use. To describe how the source domain is part of the referential, we can use the following description: 'Bringing a date to a wedding reception where

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you can easily find available women is like bringing a deer’s dead body to a hunting trip where you can easily shoot one’. Of course, the explanation could be phrased in other ways, but the overall meaning would stay the same.

The metaphor was followed by an immediate reaction from the audience. The line was a typical one-liner, meaning the joke was contained in this sole utterance. The knowledge resources analysis would go along the lines of:

Script Opposition: date vs. carcass, wedding vs. hunting;

Logical Mechanism: wedding receptions are compared to hunting parties and dates (the events) are compared to deer by saying that you do not need to bring a particular thing to an event which is already full of the thing in question;

Situation: phone conversation;

Target: women at the wedding reception

Narrative Strategy: dialog; simile

Language: n/a

In this case, scripts correspond to the source and target domains; subsequently, the explanation behind the joke is also the explanation of the metaphor. Therefore, this metaphor is the source of the joke.

One of the instances of deliberate metaphor as a source of humor is on par with what Attardo (2015) calls “a metaphor with a funny referent”. Robin, while talking with Marshall, describes their new friend Honey, who is a very gullible person. Robin describes her by saying:

- (19) She’s like this lost lamb who needs to be protected from the wolves. (6x15)

However, the phrase does not seem humorous until there is a cutscene to Barney, who is sitting in a bar booth, with a toothy grin, evoking the image of a wolf waiting for its victim. Only then does the metaphor become apparent and deliberate. The analysis and explanation of the referential meaning of the source domain would go along the lines of: ‘Honey needs to be protected from Barney who is behaving in a predator-like fashion, similarly to a lost lamb that needs to be protected from wolves’. In this case, the deliberate metaphor is only a partial source of humor due to the funny referent, which is not directly part of the simile but is part of the script opposition. The GTVH analysis of the narrative would be similar to:

Script Opposition: wolf vs. Barney, human vs. animal; predator vs prey
Logical Mechanism: Barney is behaving like a wolf about to go hunting;
Situation: Barney is at the bar, the conversation is happening over the phone;
Target: Barney
Narrative Strategy: dialog; simile
Language: n/a

Another instance of a deliberate metaphor being a source of humor occurs in (20), where the source and target domains are attributed to only one script. In this case, as it was with (19), metaphor is only part of the joke. In (20) Marshall asks Robin to illustrate anger towards him in order for him to practice facing his aggressive boss, arguing that Robin gets easily irritated. When she denies the claim, Marshall says:

(20) Treat me like I'm a Girl Scout trying to sell you cookies. (7x15)

The deliberateness of this metaphor can be described as 'get angry with me the same way you get angry when the Girl Scouts sell you cookies'. In terms of humor, the incongruity of angry vs. calm is truly resolved when Robin recalls having to buy overpriced cookies that she did not like, which enrages her more than necessary. She yells: "Four dollars a box and you're out of Thin Mints?". Therefore, the GTVH analysis of the narrative would be similar to:

Script Opposition: angry vs. calm;
Logical Mechanism: Robin is hot-headed despite denying it
Situation: a party, Marshall is trying to make Robin scream at him;
Target: Girl Scouts, Marshall (?);
Narrative Strategy: conversation; simile
Language: n/a

In the case of (20) the domains take the form of the first script, making it a partial source of the humor.

The instances where the deliberate metaphor was only a means to develop the joke are scarce. Out of all analyzed examples only a few instances were deemed as not the source of the narrative. Let us consider this example: Marshall describes the perfect burger he once had during his first months of living in New York. He gives a poetic speech about its content and says, along with a couple of other lines in a similar fashion:

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- (21) The bun, like a sesame-freckled breast of an angel, resting gently on the ketchup and mustard below. (4x02)

Following the speech, Lily, his wife, responds with: “And you took our wedding vows from the Internet”, which is followed immediately by the audience’s laughing reaction. This deliberate metaphor, where the burger bun is compared to an angel’s body part and its softness, is not the same as the scripts opposed in this narrative. What is more, the logical mechanism is also not concerned with the deliberateness of the metaphor in (21). The knowledge resources analysis would go along the lines of:

Script Opposition: describing a hamburger vs. wedding vows;
Logical Mechanism: Marshall’s description of a hamburger was more poetic than his wedding vows;
Situation: a burger place, the characters are looking for the perfect burger in New York;
Target: n/a;
Narrative Strategy: conversation;
Language: register (poetic, flowery speech); simile.

Let us consider another instance. In (22) the metaphor was only a means of humor and its primary function was to introduce and reinforce the actual script opposition occurring in the subsequent line. After a disastrous attempt at joining a New Year’s Eve party, Ted and Barney decide to invite everyone without any plans to join them at their newly opened bar, which happens to be in Ted’s apartment. Kevin, Robin’s boyfriend, who is a professional therapist but has been assigned to tending the bar that evening, says:

- (22) It’s just like being a therapist. (7x13)

While there are some similarities in both professions, the source domain is not part of the target domain meanings and consequently indicates a novel use. In terms of deliberate metaphors, the conditions are met. However, the narrative becomes humorous only in the subsequent line which explains the logical mechanism behind it: “You listen to people’s problems, pretend to care, but you can drink openly, instead of having to hide your booze in a coffee mug”. Thus, the script opposition here is focused more on the professional vs. unprofessional, or even coffee vs. alcohol, rather than therapist vs. bartender. The full knowledge resources analysis would be along the lines of:

Script Opposition: professional vs. unprofessional;
 Logical Mechanism: as explained;
 Situation: a fake bar, Ted and Marshall assign duties;
 Target: n/a;
 Narrative Strategy: dialog; simile
 Language: slang (booze);

Lastly, I would like to consider one more example of a deliberate metaphor, but this time it is not part of a humorous narrative. In (23), Robin tells Lily about her on-and-off relationship with Ted. She uses a deliberate metaphor to do this, comparing the relationship to addiction:

- (23) With me and Ted, it's like with cigarettes. You have one when you're drunk, and you think it's fine, but before you know it, you're buying a carton a week. (4x12)

The example mentioned above, as well as ten other instances, was deemed unsuitable to be part of the humorous narratives because of the contextual information and lack of laugh track both prior and following the utterance.

Table 1

Summary of the results

Deliberate metaphor as a source of humor	At least one SO matches the domains and/or LM is similar or the same as the explanation of the deliberateness	(17) <i>God sent those lice to my head like he sent the locusts to Egypt, to liberate me from corporate bondage.</i>
Deliberate metaphor as a way to express humor	SO does not match the domains and LM does not match the explanation of the deliberateness. Metaphor is still part of the humorous narrative (based on the context).	(21) <i>The bun, like a sesame-freckled breast of an angel, resting gently on the ketchup and mustard below.</i>
Non-humorous deliberate metaphor	SO and LM do not match the domains. Metaphor is not part of the humorous narrative (based on the context).	(23) (...) <i>it's like with cigarettes. You have one when you're drunk, and you think it's fine, but before you know it, you're buying a carton a week.</i>

In conclusion, the mismatch between the domains of the metaphor works similarly to the script opposition in a joke, creating a fruitful tool for producing humor both as a source and a way to convey it.

In the majority of analyzed examples, deliberate metaphors were the fundaments of the joke: at least one of the domains corresponded to the scripts of the humorous narratives, and the explanation of the referential was similar to the logical mechanism resource.

Some instances provided above have shown that deliberate metaphors can be not so much of a source of humor, but rather are a means to convey funniness, namely through reinforcing or introducing an actual script opposition or logical mechanism. In such cases, the possible humor was evoked not by deliberate metaphors, but by subsequent lines.

While there is humorous potential in deliberate metaphors, not every instance is meant to be funny; nearly one-fifth of the metaphorical examples were part of the non-humorous text of the episode. These findings further confirm Attardo’s (2015) claim that despite the similarities between these elements of language, a unified theory of metaphor and humor is not possible.

7. Limitations and further research

There are several recognized limitations to the research presented in this paper. The scope of the study and the source of the corpus are the most discussion-worthy.

The study examines the relation of deliberate metaphors and humorous narratives, especially the function that potentially deliberate metaphors have in jokes. Only metaphors with the signal *like* were analyzed, leaving out the remaining possible instances, including unmarked deliberate metaphors. While additional research is needed, one might hypothesize similar results due to the nature of deliberate metaphors themselves.

Another major limitation is the source of the corpus. Firstly, a corpus consisting of transcripts from only one sitcom is not sufficient to determine global tendencies; yet, it is a good start for discussion. Secondly, the scriptwriters, or rather their scripts, display features that are characteristic for this given show. In other words, other sitcoms may not be so rich in deliberate metaphors, and as a direct result may yield different results. Nonetheless, a more extensive corpus consisting of several TV shows can further prove or disprove the hypothesis I have posed.

Deliberate metaphor is a relatively new research direction, successfully being studied in terms of various texts (political, academic, journalistic, to name a few). The deliberateness of metaphors across different types of discourse, including the humorous ones, has the potential to add yet another layer to the communicative dimension of metaphors: funniness.

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N O T E

¹ For clarity, due to two references from the same year with almost identical authors, (Steen et al., 2010b) refers to the publication Steen, G., Dorst, A. G., Herrmann, J. B., Kaal, A. A., Krennmayr, T., & Pasma, T. (2010). *A method for linguistic metaphor identification: From MIP to MIPVU*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

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